

**A LIFERS' GROUP INC.
REPORT ON:
MA DOC EXPENDITURES
AND STAFFING LEVELS
FOR FISCAL YEAR 2017**

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HIGHLIGHTS OF MA DOC EXPENDITURES AND STAFFING LEVELS REPORT
FOR FISCAL YEAR 2017

- Total expenditures for the DOC exceeded \$599.7 million. p. 1
- Total expenditures for the DOC increased by 5% from Fiscal 2016. p. 2
- The Average Cost Per Inmate was \$68,875.23. p. 2
- The Average Cost Per Inmate increased 13% from Fiscal 2016. p. 5
- Employee Expenses increased 2%. p. 2
- Inmate Health Expenses increased 22%. p. 2
- Administrative Expenses increased 3.6% p. 2
- Infrastructure Expenses increased 1.7%. p. 2
- Inmate Program Expenses decreased .8%. p. 2
- The DOC spent less than 2¢ of every dollar for Inmate Programs. p. 4
- Inmate Health Expenses surpassed \$100 million for the first time. p. 6
- The total number of Maintenance Employees increased 53%. p. 3
- The total number of Management Employees increased 3.6%. p. 3
- The total number of Education Staff Employees decreased 18%. p. 3
- The total number of Correction Program Officers decreased 12%. p. 3
- The total number of Support Staff Employees decreased 66.6%. p. 3
- The total number of Captains decreased by 11.4% p. 3
- The ratio of Education Staff to prisoners went from 1:119 in Fiscal 2016 to 1:140 in Fiscal 2017 p. 4
- The ratio of Security Staff and Captains to prisoners was 1:2.62. p. 4
- The total number of prisoners held in Massachusetts Correctional facilities decreased 2.8% from July 1, 2016 to July 1, 2017 p. 5

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expenditures for Inmate Programs dipped below the 2% level seen in FY 2014, FY 2015, and FY 2016. Inmate Health Costs increased in FY 2017 as compared to FY 2015 by \$20,318,063 or 21.4%, while Inmate Food Costs decreased \$957,881 or 6.3%.

Three Year Comparison of DOC Staffing Levels of Full-Time Employees

<u>Category</u>	<u>FY 2017</u>		<u>FY 2016</u>		<u>FY 2015</u>	
Security	3,401	77.7%	3,660	75.0%	3,831	74.0%
Maintenance	267	6.1%	174	3.6%	180	3.5%
Corr. Program Off.	260	5.9%	296	6.1%	311	6.0%
Management	175	4.0%	169	3.5%	188	3.6%
Support Staff	141	3.2%	422	8.6%	500	9.7%
Captains	70	1.6%	79	1.6%	84	1.6%
Education Staff	65	1.5%	79	1.6%	83	1.6%
Total FTEs	4,379		4,879		5,177	
Facility Count as of July 1st of each year	9,104		9,371		10,175	
Ratio of FTEs to Inmate Population	1:2.07		1:1.92		1:1.96	

The total number of Full Time Employees decreased from 2016 to 2017 by 500 FTEs or 10.2%. Only two categories of FTEs increased from July 1, 2016 to July 1, 2017: Maintenance by 93 FTEs or 53.4% and Management by 6 FTEs or 3.6%. All other categories decreased in the number of FTEs from July 1, 2016 to July 1, 2017. They were: Support Staff by 281 FTEs or 66.6%, Education Staff by 14 FTEs or 17.7%, Correction Program Officers (CPOs) by 36 FTEs or 12.2%, Captains by 9 FTEs or 11.4%, and Security by 259 FTEs or 7.1%. The two categories which have direct interactions with prisoners are Education Staff and CPOs. They decreased a combined 50 FTEs or 13.3%

Both the Maintenance and Management categories increased in FTEs from July 1, 2016 to July 1, 2017, while both had decreased in the period from July 1, 2015 to July 1, 2016. The one category which incurred a massive decrease was the Support Staff. Since July 1, 2015, the Support Staff has decreased by 359 FTEs or 71.8%, while Security Staff has decreased by 430 FTEs or 11.2% in the same time period.

That the number of FTEs in Maintenance increased by more than 50% from July 1, 2016 to July 1, 2017 only highlights once again the point made in the last year's report on the DOC's Expenditures & Staffing Levels. To quote that report:

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For several years, the Lifers' Group Inc. has been urging the DOC to employ lifers and other skilled prisoners in meaningful positions in every institution. In the 1980's lifers and other talented prisoners were employed to teach basic courses in schools, as well as to provide electrical, plumbing, painting, masonry, and carpentry services, under the supervision of a master craftsman...

It is time to return to the 80's concept for two reasons. First, this would provide needed services at lower costs, without reducing quality. Second, it would provide skills training to prisoners so that those who return to society will have employable skills which will assist them in becoming productive citizens. What is needed is the will to use this readily available skilled work force.

The average cost of each meal in Fiscal 2017 remained the same as Fiscal 2016 at \$1.43 per meal. That was a 7¢ increase from Fiscal Year 2015. The average costs per meal were calculated by the Lifers' Group Inc. by dividing the total food expense for each year by 365, then by 3, and then by the total facility count as of July 1st of each year. The total Facility Count decreased by 28% from July 1, 2016 to July 2017, yet, the cost per meal remained the same as the Total Inmate Food Costs increased by 2.4%.

A calculation begun last year by the Lifers' Group Inc. was how many cents of each dollar did the DOC spend for each category. In Fiscal 2017, 69¢ went to Employee Expenses - down 2¢ from Fiscal 2016, 19¢ on Inmate Health Costs - up 2¢ from Fiscal 2016, 4¢ on Utilities and 3¢ on Infrastructure - both the same as Fiscal 2016, 2.4¢ on Inmate Food - down .2¢ from Fiscal 2016, 1.9¢ on Inmate Programs - down from 2¢ in Fiscal 2016, and .7¢ on Administrative Expenses and Legislative Earmarks combined - down from .9¢ in Fiscal 2016.

A ratio that the MA DOC has been leading the nation for decades is the number of FTEs to the number of prisoners. Fiscal Year 2017 did nothing to alter that position. In Fiscal 2015 that ratio was 1 FTE to every 1.96 prisoners held in Massachusetts by the DOC. In Fiscal 2016, that ratio was 1:1.92. In 2017, the ratio increased to 1:2.07. This increase was due to the large decrease in the number of Support Staff FTEs from July 1, 2016 to July 1, 2017. Even so, MA DOC is way ahead or behind, however one chooses to look at it, as state and federal ratios on average are five times higher than MA DOC. This point is even more stark when one considers the ratio of Security Staff plus Captains to prisoners. In Fiscal 2017, that ratio was 1: 2.62. In Fiscal 2016, that ratio was 1:1.92, down from 1:1.96 in Fiscal 2015. Still, the MA DOC is far ahead or behind the average for state prisons - 1:4.9, or the federal system where the ratio is 1:10. Another ratio calculated in the report for Fiscal Year 2016 and repeated in the current report was the ratio of the Education Staff to prisoners. In Fiscal 2016, that ratio was 1: 119. In Fiscal 2017, that ratio worsened to 1: 140.

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Summary of Changes Comparing FY 2017 to FY 2016 and FY 2015

	Fiscal 2017 to Fiscal 2016	Fiscal 2017 to Fiscal 2015
	<u>% Inc. or Dec.</u>	<u>% Inc. or Dec.</u>
<u>Expenses:</u>		
Employee Expenses	+ 2.0	+ 1.8
Inmate Health Costs	+ 22.1	+21.4
Utilities	- 1.4	- 3.8
Infrastructure	+ 1.7	+ 4.7
Inmate Food	- 3.4	- 6.3
Inmate Programs	- .8	- 2.6
Administrative Expenses	+ 3.6	+ 3.8
Legislative Earmarks	- 17.5	\$0 in FY 2015
Total Expenses	+ 4.9	+ 5.0
Total Facility Count	- 2.8	- 10.5
Annual Cost Per Prisoner	+ 12.9	+22.7

Annual Cost Per Prisoner -\$68,875.23 in FY 2017 vs \$60,990.17 in FY 2016 vs \$56,139.64.

Staffing Levels

Security Staff	- 7.1	- 11.2
Maintenance	+53.4	+48.3
CPOs	- 12.2	- 16.4
Management	+ 3.6	- 6.9
Support Staff	- 66.6	- 71.8
Captains	- 11.4	- 16.7
Education Staff	- 17.7	- 21.7
Total Full Time Employees	- 10.2	-15.4

Ratio of Education Staff to Prisoners in 2017 - 1:140; in 2016 - 1:119, in 2015 - 1: 123

Average cost of each meal in 2017 - \$1.43, in 2016 - \$1.43, in 2015 - \$1.36

Medical costs per prisoner in 2017 - \$12,665.68, in 2016 - \$10,079.03, in 2015 - \$9,335.75

Conclusion

In Fiscal Year 2017, the DOC came within \$271,830 of exceeding the \$600 million threshold even though there was a shrinking prisoner population. Yet, given the toll the DOC takes on taxpayer dollars, the recidivism rate showed no sight of decreasing significantly. The central purpose of the DOC should be to return prisoners to society who are prepared to live as productive citizens and contribute to society. Of course, if the DOC did accomplish this, then some of its prisons would have to close and guards would have to lose their jobs. That has not, and surely will not, happen.

The number of Security Staff did decrease by 7.1% from July 1, 2016 to July 1, 2017, but that paled in comparison to the 66.6% drop in Support Staff, the 17.7% drop in Education Staff, and the 12.2% drop in Correction Program Officers. Security Staff rose from 75% of the total of Full Time Employees on July 1, 2016 to 78% on July 1, 2017. Obviously, the DOC seeks to hold onto guards, while not replacing those positions charged with working with and rehabilitating prisoners.

One indicator of where an organization places its priorities is to examine where it spends its money. Employee Expenses from July 1, 2016 to July 1, 2017 rose 2% while funds spent on Inmate Programs decreased by .8%. That might not seem like much of a drop, but realize that the DOC now spends less than 2¢ of every dollar on Inmate Programs while spending 70¢ on Employee Expenses.

Another expense category which decreased was funds spent on Inmate Food - a decrease of 3.4%. On the other hand, funds spent on Inmate Health increased 22.1%, busting through the \$100 million mark for the first time - reaching \$115,308,393 in Fiscal 2017. Given that the number of prisoners dropped by 2.8%, the drop in food costs could have been expected. But, there is a corollary here. One reason for the significantly large increase in Inmate Health costs is that the quality and quantity of food served does not meet nutritional requirements. There has been a noticeable increase in the serving of non-nutritional processed foods, loaded with carbohydrates and sodium. The old adage: "Penny Wise and Pound Foolish" is clearly apropos when considering the decrease in costs for Inmate Food.

A second reason for the over 22% increase in Inmate Health costs is the continued lack of action by the DOC and the legislature regarding the endemic crisis of the growth in the elderly population in the MA DOC. Those age 50 and over have increased by .1% in Fiscal 2017. But, for lifers in that age group, the number increased by 4%. That is significant because the percentage of lifers age 50 and older in the MA DOC in 2017 was 45.8% and for lifers age 60 and above, the percentage was 24.0%, increasing by 5.3% in Fiscal 2017.¹ Consequently,

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lifers are the ones expected to remain longer in prison and will incur higher health costs. Studies abound which amply demonstrate that older prisoners incur two to three times medical related expenses than their younger counterparts.² Crime may be a young man's game, but prison is increasingly a very expensive old man's game. The legislature needs to pass a release avenue for those who are disabled, elderly, or medically impaired to the degree that they would not endanger the public.

The Lifers' Group Inc. has addressed this systemic problem of the aging prisoner population both in our FY 2015 and our FY 2016 Reports on DOC Expenditures and Staffing Levels. Sadly, nothing has changed - conditions have not improved. Thus, our conclusion in the FY 2016 report bears repeating here in hopes that those in the DOC and the legislature will finally take notice:

Prisons in MA are woefully under-equipped to deal with the medical, psychiatric, physical, and emotional needs of elderly prisoners. If measures are not put in place to release non-threatening elderly prisoners to facilities or programs outside the DOC, then the DOC will have no other option [than] to undertake expensive building plans. Nothing changed in Fiscal Year 2016 [nor in Fiscal 2017] to meet those needs. Prisoners who are no threat to society because they are confined to wheelchairs, have lost limbs, are dying of cancer and respiratory illnesses, or are dying after having served their country honorably still have no meaningful process for release to institutions or homes where their needs can be met humanely and at much lower costs. These prisoners should not be left to die lying in their own filth, unable to feed or clean up after themselves. The time has come, in fact long past, to find the means to better meet the requirements of prisoners, the DOC and the public-at-large for treating elderly and infirm prisoners. What also remains is the will to do what is best for all concerned.

¹ "Life" Is A Death Sentence: Aging and Dying in Massachusetts Prisons. Lifers' Group Inc., Dirk Greineder, Vice Chairman. January 2018.

² MASS(incarceration) of the Elderly. Lifers' Group Inc., Dirk Greineder, Vice Chairman. April 2016.

NOTE: Both of the above reports can be accessed at: www.realcostofprisons.org/writing.

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The Lifers' Group Inc. welcomes all comments, criticisms, and/or questions concerning this report. Please direct all comments, criticisms and/or questions to:

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